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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards in the area of English language arts at grades 4, 8, and 12. The content and performance standards represent the best thinking of language educators and interested members of the public. They were drawn from two years of work in Wisconsin's standards development projects, from the Modern Red Schoolhouse standards, from the standards of other states, from the work of the New Standards project, and from the national "Standards for the English Language Arts." After a letter from the Lieutenant Governor and the State Superintendent, a list of acknowledgments, and an introduction, the booklet presents the standards for reading/literature, writing, oral language, language, media and technology, and research and inquiry. The booklet then presents a writing task and samples of advanced, proficient, basic, and minimal samples of students' writing. Appendixes present a summary of the English language arts standards, and a list of the individuals and members of groups who contributed to the development of the standards. (RS)

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WISCONSIN'S MODEL ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR

English Language Arts

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*Established by Governor Tommy G. Thompson, January 29, 1997

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A Letter From the Lieutenant Governor and the State Superintendent

To the Citizens of Wisconsin:

On behalf of the Governor's Council on Model Academic Standards, it is our pleasure to present Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards in the area of English language arts at grades four (4), eight (8), and twelve (12). Wisconsin has long been a model for other states in terms of educational quality. However, the world is rapidly becoming a more complex and challenging place. As a result, we must expect greater academic achievement from our children today if they are to be adequately prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. While Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards do demand more of our children, we are confident that they are equal to the task.

These standards are also significant because they herald the dramatically different way in which student achievement will be judged. In the past, achievement was determined by comparing a student's grades to those of his or her peers. In the future, mastery of subject matter will be objectively measured against these new standards at grades four, eight, and twelve. In this way we will know how well a student is learning, not how well that student is doing compared to others.

These model academic standards represent the work of writing teams made up of people from diverse backgrounds. Drafts were subjected to extensive public engagement in which hundreds of additional people offered input. The process of reaching consensus yielded a draft that enjoys very strong public support. Over 74 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the standards will prepare students for the future. Seventy percent felt they are sufficiently rigorous. Nearly 70 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they are clearly understandable and specific enough to guide local curricula and standards.

It must be stressed that these standards are not intended to limit local districts. Instead they are a model to be met or exceeded. The Council specifically encouraged local districts to implement standards that are more rigorous. However, districts must remember that assessment, including high school graduation exams based on standards, awaits every student in Wisconsin.

In closing, we want to commend the many members of the writing work groups. These teams, comprised of parents, teachers, business people, school board members, and administrators, gave freely of their time to produce the initial drafts. Finally, the citizens of Wisconsin must be thanked for devoting their time and effort to the development of the final draft of Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards.

Scott McCallum, Lt. Governor

John T. Benson, State Superintendent

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Introduction

Defining the Academic Standards

What are academic standards? Academic standards specify what students should know and be able to do, what they might be asked to do to give evidence of standards, and how well they must perform. They include content, performance, and proficiency standards.

— Content standards refer to *what* students should know and be able to do.

— Performance standards tell *how* students will show that they are meeting a standard.

— Proficiency standards indicate *how well* students must perform.

Why are academic standards necessary? Standards serve as rigorous goals for teaching and learning. Setting high standards enables students, parents, educators, and citizens to know what students should have learned at a given point in time. The absence of standards has consequences similar to lack of goals in any pursuit. Without clear goals, students may be unmotivated and confused.

Contemporary society is placing immense academic demands on students. Clear statements about what students must know and be able to do are essential to ensure that our schools offer students the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

Why are state-level academic standards important? Public education is a state responsibility. The state superintendent and legislature must ensure that all children have equal access to high quality educational programs. At a minimum, this requires clear statements of what all children in the state should know and be able to do as well as evidence that students are meeting these expectations. Furthermore, academic standards form a sound basis on which to establish the content of a statewide assessment system.

Why does Wisconsin need its own academic standards? Historically, the citizens of Wisconsin are very serious and thoughtful about education. They expect and receive very high performance from their schools. While educational needs may be similar among states, values differ. Standards should reflect the collective values of the citizens and be tailored to prepare young people for economic opportunities that exist in Wisconsin, the nation, and the world.

Developing the Academic Standards

How were Wisconsin's model academic standards developed? Citizens throughout the state developed the academic standards. The first phase involved educators, parents, board of education members, and business and industry people who produced preliminary content and performance standards in 12 subjects including English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, visual arts, music, theatre, dance, family and consumer education, foreign language, health education, and physical education. These standards are benchmarked to the end of grades 4, 8, and 12.

The next step required public input aimed at getting information to revise and improve the preliminary standards. This effort included forums and focus groups held throughout the state. The state superintendent used extensive media exposure, including telecommunications through the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) home page, to ensure the widest possible awareness and participation in standards development.

Each subject had at least two drafts taken to the general public for their review. Based on this input, the standards were revised to reflect the values of Wisconsin's citizens.

In January 1997, Governor Thompson appointed the Governor's Council on Model Academic Standards. The Council augmented the existing Department of Public Instruction task forces with additional appointees by the Council, these newly configured task forces produced another draft of model academic standards for the subjects that are part of the state assessment system. These include English language arts, mathematics, reading, science, and social studies.

Once these draft standards were completed, public review became the focus. Using a series of statewide forums coupled with a wide mailing distribution and telecommunications access through both the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the lieutenant governor's home pages, Wisconsin citizens provided valuable feedback. As with previous drafts, all comments received serious consideration.

Who wrote the academic standards and what resources were used? Each subject area's academic standards were drafted by teams of educators, parents, board of education members, and business and industry people that were sub-groups of larger task forces. This work was done after reviewing national standards in the subject area, standards from other states, standards from local Wisconsin school districts, and standards like the nationwide New Standards Project.

After the creation of the Governor's Council on Model Academic Standards, four task forces representing English language arts (reading was folded into this group) mathematics, science, and social studies were appointed. Combining the existing DPI task force members with the Council's appointees further ensured that the many voices of Wisconsin's citizenry were represented through the parents, educators, school board members, and business and industry people sitting on those task forces. Documents reviewed included the national standards in the subject area, standards from other states, and standards from local Wisconsin schools. The two most frequently used resources were the first and second drafts of content and performance standards developed by the DPI and the Modern Red Schoolhouse standards developed by the Hudson Institute and Dr. Finley McQuade.

How was the public involved in the standards process? The DPI was involved in extensive public engagement activities to gather citizen input on the first two drafts of the academic standards. Over 19 focus group sessions, 17 community forums, and more than 450 presentations at conferences, conventions, and workshops were held. More than 500,000 paper copies of the standards tabloids were distributed across the state in addition to more than 4,000 citizen visits to the standards on the DPI web page. Input from these activities, along with more than 90 reviews by state and national organizations, provided the writers with feedback on Wisconsin's model academic standards.

Continuing the emphasis on public engagement started by the DPI with previous standards drafts, the Governor's Council on Model Academic Standards held nine community forums. In addition, more than 50,000 paper copies of the standards were distributed. Recipients included each public school building as well as all major education stakeholders and interest groups. Lending the prestige of their offices to the standards development, members of the Council met with editorial boards of media outlets throughout the state discussing the model academic standards.

Will academic standards be developed in areas other than the 12 areas listed above? Yes, currently the DPI has convened six task forces to develop academic standards in agriculture, business, environmental education, marketing, technology education, and information and technology literacy. Task force members include educators, parents, school board members, and representatives of business and industry. These academic standards will be completed by the start of the 1998-99 school year.

Using the Academic Standards

How will the Department of Public Instruction use the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards? Upon completing its work, the Governor's Council on Model Academic Standards submitted academic content and performance standards for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies to the governor. On January 13, 1998, Governor Thompson signed Executive Order 326, thus approving and issuing the model academic and performance standards developed by the Governor's Council. These approved standards will be used as the basis for state testing, especially as it relates to the Wisconsin Reading Comprehension Test, the Wisconsin Student Assessment System, and the planned High School Graduation Test.

Additionally, the DPI will use the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards as the basis for revision of its *Guides to Curriculum Planning* and as the foundation for professional development activities that it sponsors.

Must a district adopt the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards? Adopting the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards is voluntary, not mandatory. Districts, however, must have academic standards in place by August 1, 1998. At a minimum, districts are required to have standards in reading and writing, geography and history, mathematics, and science. Districts may adopt the model state standards, or standards from other sources, or develop their own standards.

How will local districts use the academic standards? Districts may use the academic standards as guides for developing local grade-by-grade level curriculum. Implementing standards may require some school districts to upgrade school and district curriculums. In some cases, this may result in significant changes in instructional methods and materials, local assessments, and professional development opportunities for the teaching and administrative staff.

What is the difference between academic standards and curriculum? Standards are statements about what students should know and be able to do, what they might be asked to do to give evidence of learning, and how well they should be expected to know or do it. Curriculum is the program devised by local school districts used to prepare students to meet standards. It consists of activities and lessons at each grade level, instructional materials, and various instructional techniques. In short, standards define what is to be learned at certain points in time, and from a broad perspective, what performances will be accepted as evidence that the learning has occurred. Curriculum specifies the details of the day-to-day schooling at the local level.

What is the link between statewide academic standards and statewide testing? Statewide academic standards in mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies determine the scope of statewide testing. While these standards are much broader in content than any single Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) test, they do describe the range of knowledge and skills that may appear on the tests. If content does not appear in the academic standards, it will not be part of a WSAS test. The statewide standards clarify what must be studied to prepare for WSAS tests. If students have learned all of the material indicated by the standards in the assessed content areas, they should do very well on the state tests.

Relating the Academic Standards to All Students

Parents and educators of students with disabilities, with limited English proficiency (LEP), and with accelerated needs may ask why academic standards are important for their students. Academic standards serve as a valuable basis for establishing meaningful goals as part of each student's developmental progress and demonstration of proficiency. The clarity of academic standards provides meaningful, concrete goals for the achievement of students with exceptional education needs (EEN), LEP, and accelerated needs consistent with all other students.

Academic standards may serve as the foundation for individualized programming decisions for students with EEN, LEP, and accelerated needs. While the vast majority of students with EEN and LEP should be expected to work toward and achieve these standards, accommodations and modifications to help these students reach the achievement goals will need to be individually identified and implemented. For students with EEN, these decisions are made as part of their individualized education program (IEP) plans. Accelerated students may achieve well beyond the academic standards and move into advanced grade levels or into advanced coursework.

Clearly, these academic standards are for all students. As our state assessments are aligned with these standards and school districts adopt, adapt, or develop their own standards and multiple measures for determining proficiencies of students, greater accountability for the progress of all students can be assured. In Wisconsin this means all students reaching their full individual potential, every school being accountable, every parent a welcomed partner, every community supportive, and no excuses.

Applying the Academic Standards Across the Curriculum

When community members and employers consider what they want citizens and employees to know and be able to do, they often speak of broad areas of applied knowledge such as communication, thinking, problem solving, and decision making. These areas connect or go beyond the mastery of individual subject areas. As students apply their knowledge both within and across the various curricular areas, they develop the concepts and complex thinking of educated persons.

Community members need these skills to function as responsible citizens. Employers prize those employees who demonstrate these skills because they are people who can continue learning and connect what they have learned to the requirements of a job. College and university faculty recognize the need for these skills as the means of developing the level of understanding that separates the expert from the beginner.

Teachers in every class should expect and encourage the development of these shared applications, both to promote the learning of the subject content and to extend learning across the curriculum. These applications fall into five general categories:

1) **Application of the Basics**

2) **Ability to Think**
   - — Problem solving
   - — Informed decision making
   - — Systems thinking
   - — Critical, creative, and analytical thinking
   - — Imagining places, times, and situations different from one's own
   - — Developing and testing a hypothesis
   - — Transferring learning to new situations

3) **Skill in Communication**
   - — Constructing and defending an argument
   - — Working effectively in groups
   - — Communicating plans and processes for reaching goals
   - — Receiving and acting on instructions, plans, and models
   - — Communicating with a variety of tools and skills

4) **Production of Quality Work**
   - — Acquiring and using information
   - — Creating quality products and performances
   - — Revising products and performances
   - — Developing and pursuing positive goals

5) **Connections with Community**
   - — Recognizing and acting on responsibilities as a citizen
   - — Preparing for work and lifelong learning
   - — Contributing to the aesthetic and cultural life of the community
   - — Seeing oneself and one's community within the state, nation, and world
   - — Contributing and adapting to scientific and technological change

Overview of English Language Arts

These content and performance standards represent the best thinking of language educators and interested members of the public. They were drawn from two years of work in Wisconsin's standards development projects, from the Modern Red Schoolhouse standards, from the standards of other states, such as Virginia and Colorado, from the work of the New Standards project, and from the national *Standards for the English Language Arts*.

Language Arts: A Developmental Subject

Much of what we expect students to be able to do at the end of their formal education is introduced as early as kindergarten. Students listen, read, speak, write, use language, and enjoy literature at all levels and grades. The difficulty of the materials, the complexity of what students do with them, and the sophistication of their skills change as they grow older. In practice, teachers build on what students have already achieved at one level to help them meet higher standards at the next level.

Great Authors and Literary Works

Human beings have produced a rich treasury of great writing. The language arts standards, like those of most states, do not specify a list of authors or works that must be read by all students. Selection of authors and works is left to language arts specialists who create the curriculum in each school district. What is most important is that students learn to read well and read enough to meet their various needs and interests, that they have opportunities to read quality literature, and that they love to read. Precisely which works are read may vary from community to community. Selected resources are listed after the reading and literature standard.

Connectedness

Finally, although the domain of language arts is divided into six sets of standards for focus and clarity, these divisions, in the classroom and in practical use of the language, are artificial. To use media, one must read or listen. To write, one must acquire knowledge by reading, listening, and viewing. To do research, one must read. To communicate in any form, one must know how the language works. Most performance standards expect students to achieve a level of proficiency in more than one content standard. Moreover, since all communication has content, the language arts standards are closely connected to Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in other subjects.

A. READING AND LITERATURE

Content Standard

Students in Wisconsin will read and respond to a wide range of writing to build an understanding of written materials, of themselves, and of others.

Rationale: Reading is a complex, interactive process that continues to be a primary means of acquiring and using information. Society regards reading as essential to daily living. Because reading is fundamental to the mastery of other school subjects, students at all levels must learn to understand what they read. They must know and use various strategies—ways of unlocking the meaning of words and larger blocks of text—to become successful readers.

Students should be challenged to read literature and other materials that reflect and stimulate their interests and intellectual abilities. They should read a wide variety of materials, including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, and other written works that reveal the richness and diversity of our heritage, afford opportunities to acquire new information, refine perspectives, respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace, and provide for personal fulfillment.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

▶ *BY THE END OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS WILL:*

A.4.1 Use effective reading strategies to achieve their purposes in reading

- Use a variety of strategies and word recognition skills, including rereading, finding context clues, applying knowledge of letter-sound relationships, and analyzing word structures
- Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words in the context of a passage by examining known words, phrases, and structures
- Demonstrate phonemic awareness by using letter/sound relationships as aids to pronouncing and understanding unfamiliar words and text
- Comprehend reading by using strategies such as activating prior knowledge, establishing purpose, self-correcting, self-monitoring, rereading, making predictions, finding context clues, developing visual images, applying knowledge of text structures, and adjusting reading rate according to purpose and difficulty
- Read aloud with age-appropriate fluency, accuracy, and expression
- Discern how written texts and accompanying illustrations connect to convey meaning
- Identify and use organizational features of texts, such as headings, paragraphs, and format, to improve understanding
- Identify a purpose for reading, such as gaining information, learning about a viewpoint, or appreciating literature

A.4.2 Read, interpret, and critically analyze literature

- Recognize and recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot, and setting, in order to reflect on meaning
- Draw upon a reservoir of reading materials, including fairy tales, fables, and narratives from the United States and cultures worldwide, to understand plots, make predictions, and relate reading to prior knowledge and experience
- Summarize ideas drawn from stories, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, interpreting events and ideas, and connecting different works to each other and to real-life experiences
- Extend the literal meaning of a text by making inferences, and evaluate the significance and validity of texts in light of prior knowledge and experience

A.4.3 Read and discuss literary and nonliterary texts in order to understand human experience

- Demonstrate the ability to integrate general knowledge about the world and familiarity with literary and nonliterary texts when reflecting upon life's experiences
- Identify and summarize main ideas and key points from literature, informational texts, and other print and nonprint sources
- Distinguish fiction from nonfiction, realistic fiction from fantasy, biography from autobiography, and poetry from prose
- Select a variety of materials to read for discovery, appreciation, and enjoyment, summarize the readings, and connect them to prior knowledge and experience

A.4.4 Read to acquire information

- Summarize key details of informational texts, connecting new information to prior knowledge
- Identify a topic of interest and seek information about it by investigating available text resources

BY THE END OF GRADE 8 STUDENTS WILL:

A.8.1 Use effective reading strategies to achieve their purposes in reading

- Use knowledge of sentence and word structure, word origins, visual images, and context clues to understand unfamiliar words and clarify passages of text
- Use knowledge of the visual features of texts, such as headings and bold face print, and structures of texts, such as chronology and cause-and-effect, as aids to comprehension
- Establish purposeful reading and writing habits by using texts to find information, gain understanding of diverse viewpoints, make decisions, and enjoy the experience of reading
- Select, summarize, paraphrase, analyze, and evaluate, orally and in writing, passages of texts chosen for specific purposes

A.8.2 Read, interpret, and critically analyze literature

- Identify the defining features and structure of literary texts, such as conflict, representation of character, and point of view
- Analyze the effect of characters, plot, setting, language, topic, style, purpose, and point of view on the overall impact of literature
- Draw on a broad base of knowledge about the genres of literature, such as the structure and conventions of essays, epics, fables, myths, plays, poems, short stories, and novels, when interpreting the meaning of a literary work
- Develop criteria to evaluate literary merit and explain critical opinions about a text, either informally in conversation or formally in a well-organized speech or essay

A.8.3 Read and discuss literary and nonliterary texts in order to understand human experience

- Provide interpretive responses, orally and in writing, to literary and nonliterary texts representing the diversity of American cultural heritage and cultures of the world
- Identify common historical, social, and cultural themes and issues in literary works and selected passages
- Draw on a broad base of knowledge about the themes, ideas, and insights found in classical literature while reading, interpreting, and reflecting on contemporary texts
- Evaluate the themes and main ideas of a work considering its audience and purpose

A.8.4 Read to acquire information

- Interpret and use technical resources such as charts, tables, travel schedules, timelines, and manuals
- Compare, contrast, and evaluate the relative accuracy and usefulness of information from different sources
- Identify and explain information, main ideas, and organization found in a variety of informational passages
- Distinguish between the facts found in documents, narratives, charts, maps, tables, and other sources and the generalizations and interpretations that are drawn from them

BY THE END OF GRADE 12 STUDENTS WILL:

A.12.1 Use effective reading strategies to achieve their purposes in reading

- Apply sophisticated word meaning and word analysis strategies, such as knowledge of roots, cognates, suffixes, and prefixes, to understand unfamiliar words
- Gather information to help achieve understanding when the meaning of a text is unclear
- Apply knowledge of expository structures, such as the deductive or inductive development of an argument, to the comprehension and evaluation of texts
- Identify propaganda techniques and faulty reasoning in texts
- Explain and evaluate the influence of format on the readability and meaning of a text
- Distinguish between fact and opinion in nonfiction texts
- Consider the context of a work when determining the meaning of abbreviations and acronyms as well as the technical, idiomatic, and figurative meanings of terms

A.12.2 Read, interpret, and critically analyze literature

- Explain the structure of selected classical and contemporary works of literature, in whole and in part, from various cultures and historical periods, and illustrate ways in which authors use syntax, imagery, figures of speech, allusions, symbols, irony, and other devices in the context of history, culture, and style
- Draw on a broad base of knowledge about the universal themes of literature such as initiation, love and duty, heroism, illusion and reality, salvation, death and rebirth, and explain how these themes are developed in a particular work of literature
- Investigate and report on ways in which a writer has influenced or been influenced by historical, social, and cultural issues or events
- Develop, explain, and defend interpretations of complex literary works
- Explain how details of language, setting, plot, character, conflict, point of view, and voice in a work of literature combine to produce a dominant tone, effect, or theme
- Develop and apply criteria to evaluate the literary merit of unfamiliar works

A.12.3 Read and discuss literary and nonliterary texts in order to understand human experience

- Examine, explain, and evaluate, orally and in writing, various perspectives concerning individual, community, national, and world issues reflected in literary and nonliterary texts
- Develop and articulate, orally and in writing, defensible points of view on individual, community, national, and world issues reflected in literary and nonliterary texts
- Identify the devices an author uses to influence readers and critique the effectiveness of their use
- Identify philosophical assumptions and basic beliefs underlying selected texts

A.12.4 Students will read to acquire information

- Apply tests of logic and reasoning to informational and persuasive texts
- Analyze and synthesize the concepts and details encountered in informational texts such as reports, technical manuals, historical papers, and government documents
- Draw on and integrate information from multiple sources when acquiring knowledge and developing a position on a topic of interest
- Evaluate the reliability and authenticity of information conveyed in a text, using criteria based on knowledge of the author, topic, and context and analysis of logic, evidence, propaganda, and language

Selected Resources

The following sampling of resources may be useful to school districts as they develop language arts curricula based on the Reading/Literature standards. Some of the sources listed provide more reading lists than those mentioned.

American Library Association (ALA) (1-800-545-2433)

Best Books for Young Adults. Annual list of the best fiction and nonfiction for young adults.

The Coretta Scott King Awards Books: From Vision to Reality. Award-winning children's and young adult books published between 1970-1993 and written or illustrated by African-American book creators.

Notable Children's Books. An annual listing of between 50-80 books.

Outstanding Books for the College Bound. A 16-page annotated brochure with titles in fiction, nonfiction, biography, theater, and fine arts.

Top One Hundred Countdown: Best of the Best Books for Young Adults. Top 100 titles for young adults from the past 25 years.

Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), School of Education, UW-Madison (608-263-3720)

CCBC Choices. Annual, annotated bibliography of children's and young adult literature. Send self-addressed, stamped business envelope to CCBC, 4290 Helen C. White Hall, 600 N. Park St., Madison, WI 53706.

Multicultural Literature of Children and Young Adults. Annotated bibliography of over 400 publications by or about African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans. Available from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (1-800-243-8782).

International Reading Association (IRA) (1-800-336-READ)

Children's Choices. New children's books selected by children and grouped by reading levels.

Favorite Paperbacks for 1994. Over 100 popular paperbacks.

Magazines for Kids and Teens. Descriptions of more than 200 magazines from around the world.

Teacher's Choices. Teachers' selections of new books for children and adolescents.

Young Adults' Choices. New books selected by young adult readers.

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (1-800-369-6283)

Books for Junior High. Literature especially suitable to the junior high/middle school years and ways to approach that literature with students.

Books for You: A Booklist for Senior High Students, 11th ed. Nearly 800 plot summaries of current books of high literary quality.

Kaleidoscope: A Multicultural Booklist for Grades K-8. An annotated bibliography of 400 books selected by content specialists featuring books published between 1990-1992.

The New Standards Project (NSP) (202-783-3668)

The New Standards Project has lists of recommended books at elementary, middle, and high school levels. The mailing address is 700 Eleventh Street, NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001.

Selected Websites

Note: The following websites were visited on November 16, 1997. Users should be aware that websites are frequently changed.

Children's Literature Web Guide [http://www.ucalgary.cal~dkbrown/index.html] Comprehensive page of Internet resources related to books for children and young adults.

Cooperative Children's Book Center [http://www.soemadison.wisc.edu/ccbc/]
A children's and young adult literature site created especially for teachers and librarians in Wisconsin. Includes reviews.

Project Bartleby [http://www.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/]
An archive of actual texts of classic works on the Web.

Project Gutenberg [http://promo.net/pg/]
Another archive of actual texts of classic books.

B. WRITING

CONTENT STANDARD

Students in Wisconsin will write clearly and effectively to share information and knowledge, to influence and persuade, to create and entertain.

Rationale: Written communication skills are central to learning. Whether in academic life, in the workplace, or in personal life, they offer a powerful advantage in a world in which people must constantly learn new information. To become confident and effective writers, students need to learn how to write for various purposes and audiences. They need to try different approaches and to reconsider what they have written through revision and editing. To ensure that their writing is understood and well-received, students need a working knowledge of language as well as grammatical structures, diction and usage, punctuation, spelling, layout, and presentation. This knowledge is also invaluable for discussing, critiquing, revising, and editing written communication in almost any form.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

▶ *BY THE END OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS WILL:*

B.4.1 Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes

- Write nonfiction and technical pieces (summaries, messages, informational essays, basic directions, instructions, simple reports) that convey essential details and facts and provide accurate representations of events and sequences
- Write expressive pieces in response to reading, viewing, and life experiences (narratives, reflections, and letters) employing descriptive detail and a personal voice
- Write creative pieces (poetry, fiction, and plays) employing basic aesthetic principles appropriate to each genre
- Write in a variety of situations (timed and untimed, at school and at home) and adapt strategies, such as revision and the use of reference materials, to the situation
- Use a variety of writing technologies, including pen and paper as well as computers
- Write for a variety of readers, including peers, teachers, and other adults, adapting content, style, and structure to audience and situation

B.4.2 Plan, revise, edit, and publish clear and effective writing

- Produce multiple drafts, including finished pieces, that demonstrate the capacity to generate, focus, and organize ideas and to revise the language, organization, and content of successive drafts in order to fulfill a specific purpose for communicating with a specific audience
- Explain the extent and reasons for revision in conference with a teacher
- Given a writing assignment to be completed in a limited amount of time, produce a well developed, well organized, and effective response in correct English and an appropriate voice

B.4.3 Understand the function of various forms, structures, and punctuation marks of standard American English and use them appropriately in communications

- Understand and use parts of speech effectively, including nouns, pronouns, and adjectives
- Use adverbials effectively, including words and phrases
- Employ principles of agreement related to number, gender, and case
- Capitalize proper nouns, titles, and initial words of sentences
- Use punctuation marks and conjunctions, as appropriate, to separate sentences and connect independent clauses
- Use commas correctly to punctuate appositives and lists
- Spell frequently used words correctly
- Use word order and punctuation marks to distinguish statements, questions, exclamations, and commands

BY THE END OF GRADE 8 STUDENTS WILL:

B.8.1 Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes

- Write a coherent and complete expository piece, with sufficient detail to fulfill its purpose, sufficient evidence to support its assertions, language appropriate for its intended audience, and organization achieved through clear coordination and subordination of ideas
- Write a persuasive piece (such as a letter to a specific person or a script promoting a particular product) that includes a clear position, a discernible tone, and a coherent argument with reliable evidence
- Write a narrative based on experience that uses descriptive language and detail effectively, presents a sequence of events, and reveals a theme
- Write clear and pertinent responses to verbal or visual material that communicate, explain, and interpret the reading or viewing experience to a specific audience
- Write creative fiction that includes major and minor characters, a coherent plot, effective imagery, descriptive language, and concrete detail
- Write in a variety of situations (during an exam, in a computer lab) and adapt strategies, such as revision, technology, and the use of reference materials, to the situation
- Use a variety of writing technologies including pen and paper as well as computers
- Write for a variety of readers, including peers, teachers, and other adults, adapting content, style, and structure to audience and situation

B.8.2 Plan, revise, edit, and publish clear and effective writing

- Produce multiple drafts, including finished pieces, that demonstrate the capacity to generate, focus, and organize ideas and to revise the language, organization, content, and tone of successive drafts in order to fulfill a specific purpose for communicating with a specific audience
- Identify questions and strategies for improving drafts in writing conferences with a teacher
- Given a writing assignment to be completed in a limited amount of time, produce a well developed, well organized, and effective response in correct English and an appropriate voice

B.8.3 Understand the function of various forms, structures, and punctuation marks of standard American English and use them appropriately in written communications

- Understand the function of words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence and use them effectively, including coordinate and subordinate conjunctions, relative pronouns, and comparative adjectives
- Use correct tenses to indicate the relative order of events
- Understand and employ principles of agreement, including subject-verb, pronoun-noun, and preposition-pronoun
- Punctuate compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences correctly
- Employ the conventions of capitalization
- Spell frequently used words correctly and use effective strategies for spelling unfamiliar words

BY THE END OF GRADE 12 STUDENTS WILL:

B.12.1 Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes

- Write a coherent argument that takes a position, accurately summarizes an opposing position, refutes that position, and cites persuasive evidence
- Compose and publish analytic and reflective writing that conveys knowledge, experience, insights, and opinions to an intended audience
- Use rhetorical structures that divide complex thoughts into simpler ones, logical transitions from one thought to another, and language appropriate to the intended audience
- Write creative fiction that includes an authentic setting, discernible tone, coherent plot, distinct characters, effective detail, believable dialogue, and reasonable resolution of conflict
- Write summaries of complex information (such as information in a lengthy text or a sequence of events), expand or reduce the summaries by adding or deleting detail, and integrate appropriately summarized information into reviews, reports, or essays, with correct citations
- Write autobiographical and biographical narratives in a mature style characterized by suitable vocabulary, descriptive detail, effective syntax, an appropriate voice, a variety of sentence structures, clear coordination and subordination of ideas, and rhetorical devices that help establish tone and reinforce meaning
- Prepare and publish technical writing such as memos, applications, letters, reports and resumes for various audiences, attending to details of layout and format as appropriate to purpose
- Write in a variety of situations (impromptu, over time, in collaboration, alone) and adapt strategies, such as revision, technology, and the use of reference materials, to the situation
- Use a variety of writing technologies, including pen and paper as well as computers
- Write for a variety of readers, including peers, teachers, and other adults, adapting content, style, and structure to audience and situation

B.12.2 Plan, revise, edit, and publish clear and effective writing

- Write essays demonstrating the capacity to communicate knowledge, opinions, and insights to an intended audience through a clear thesis and effective organization of supporting ideas
- Develop a composition through a series of drafts, using a revision strategy based on purpose and audience, personal style, self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses as a writer, and feedback from peers and teachers
- Given a writing assignment to be completed in a limited amount of time, produce a well developed, well organized, clearly written response in effective language and a voice appropriate for audience and purpose

B.12.3 Understand the function of various forms, structures, and punctuation marks of standard American English and use them appropriately in written communications

- Understand the form and function of words, phrases, and clauses, including inter-related clauses in complex sentences, and use them effectively
- Use correct tenses, including conditionals, to indicate the relative order and relationship of events
- Employ principles of agreement, including subject-verb, pronoun-noun, and preposition-pronoun
- Punctuate compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences correctly, including appropriate use of dialogue, citations, colons, hyphens, dashes, ellipses, and italics
- Employ the conventions of capitalization
- Spell frequently used words correctly and use effective strategies for spelling unfamiliar words
- Recognize common errors in the use of language and know how (and when) to correct them

C. ORAL LANGUAGE

CONTENT STANDARD

Students in Wisconsin will listen to understand and will speak clearly and effectively for diverse purposes.

Rationale: The spoken word, essential to our individual and social development, remains a central means of communication. Whether in informal interactions or more formal settings, speakers are required to communicate clearly in a manner that befits the occasion.

Listening is the most used and least understood of all communication skills. We spend approximately 45 percent of all communication time and as much as 57 percent of school instruction time listening. The ability to listen and to follow instructions is highly prized in the workplace.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

▶ *BY THE END OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS WILL:*

C.4.1 Orally communicate information, opinions, and ideas effectively to different audiences for a variety of purposes

- Identify and discuss criteria for effective oral presentations, including such factors as eye contact, projection, tone, volume, rate, and articulation
- Read aloud effectively from previously-read material
- Speaking from notes or a brief outline, communicate precise information and accurate instructions in clearly organized and sequenced detail
- Present autobiographical or fictional stories that recount events effectively to large and small audiences
- Participate in group readings, such as choral, echo, and shadow reading
- Perform dramatic readings and presentations
- Distinguish between fact and opinion and provide evidence to support opinions

C.4.2 Listen to and comprehend oral communications

- Follow basic directions
- Identify and summarize key points of a story or discussion
- Retell stories and reports of events in proper sequence
- Follow sequence in plot and character development, predict outcomes, and draw conclusions
- Recall the content of stories after hearing them, relate the content to prior knowledge, and answer various types of factual and interpretive questions about the stories
- Distinguish fact from fantasy and fact from opinion
- Understand increasingly complex sentence structures
- Understand a variety of word structures and forms, such as affixes, roots, homonyms, antonyms, synonyms, and word analogies

C.4.3 Participate effectively in discussion

- Volunteer relevant information, ask relevant questions, and answer questions directly
- Use appropriate eye contact and other nonverbal cues
- Use appropriate strategies to keep a discussion going
- Reflect on the ideas and opinions of others and respond thoughtfully
- Ask for clarification and explanation of unfamiliar words and ideas
- Summarize information conveyed through discussion

BY THE END OF GRADE 8 STUDENTS WILL:

C.8.1 Orally communicate information, opinions, and ideas effectively to different audiences for a variety of purposes

- Share brief impromptu remarks about topics of interest to oneself and others
- Speaking from notes or an outline, relate an experience in descriptive detail, with a sense of timing and decorum appropriate to the occasion
- Perform expressive oral readings of prose, poetry, and drama
- Prepare and conduct interviews
- Present a coherent, comprehensive report on differing viewpoints on an issue, evaluating the content of the material presented, and organizing the presentation in a manner appropriate to the audience
- Differentiate between formal and informal contexts and employ an appropriate style of speaking, adjusting language, gestures, rate, and volume according to audience and purpose
- Observe the appropriate etiquette when expressing thanks and receiving praise

C.8.2 Listen to and comprehend oral communications

- Summarize and explain the information conveyed in an oral communication, accounting for the key ideas, structure, and relationship of parts to the whole
- Distinguish among purposes for listening, such as gaining information or being entertained, and take notes as appropriate
- Recall significant details and sequence accurately
- Follow a speaker's argument and represent it in notes
- Evaluate the reliability of information in a communication, using criteria based on prior knowledge of the speaker, the topic, and the context and on analysis of logic, evidence, propaganda devices, and language

C.8.3 Participate effectively in discussion

- Participate in discussion by listening attentively, demonstrating respect for the opinions of others, and responding responsibly and courteously to the remarks of others
- Explain and advance opinions by citing evidence and referring to sources
- Evaluate the stated ideas and opinions of others, seeking clarification through questions
- Invite ideas and opinions of others into the discussion, responding clearly and tactfully to questions and comments
- Accept and use helpful criticism
- Establish and maintain an open mind when listening to others' ideas and opinions
- Summarize the main points of a discussion, orally and in writing, specifying areas of agreement and disagreement and paraphrasing contributions
- Display and maintain facial expressions, body language, and other response cues that indicate respect for the speaker and attention to the discussion
- Attend to the content of discussion rather than the speaker
- Participate in discussion without dominating
- Distinguish between supported and unsupported statements

BY THE END OF GRADE 12 STUDENTS WILL:

C.12.1 Prepare and deliver formal oral presentations appropriate to specific purposes and audiences

- Develop and deliver a speech that conveys information and ideas in logical fashion for a selected audience, using language that clarifies and reinforces meaning
- Construct and present a coherent argument, summarizing then refuting opposing positions, and citing persuasive evidence
- Participate effectively in question-and-answer sessions following presentations
- Summarize narrative and numerical information accurately and logically in presentations
- Demonstrate confidence and poise during presentations, interacting effectively with the audience, and selecting language and gestures mindful of their effect
- Demonstrate the ability to debate an issue from either side
- Interpret literary works orally, citing textual data in support of assertions
- Synthesize and present results of research projects, accurately summarizing and illustrating the main ideas, using appropriate technological aids, and offering support for the conclusions
- Speak fluently with varied inflection and effective eye contact, enunciating clearly at an appropriate rate and volume
- Observe the appropriate etiquette when expressing thanks and receiving praise

C.12.2 Listen to, discuss, and comprehend oral communications

- Attend to both literal and connotative meanings
- Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information
- Distinguish fact from opinion, evaluate logic, and identify manipulative techniques
- Analyze messages for their accuracy and usefulness
- Evaluate a speaker's use of diction, tone, syntax, rhetorical structure, and conventions of language considering the purpose and context of the communication
- Relate a speaker's ideas and information to prior knowledge and experience
- Consider the specific situation and current conditions when responding to instructions

C.12.3 Participate effectively in discussion

- Detect and evaluate a speaker's bias
- Consider the ideas and opinions of other speakers thoughtfully before responding
- Evaluate the validity and adequacy of ideas, arguments, hypotheses, and evidence
- Be aware of and try to control counterproductive emotional responses to a speaker or ideas conveyed in a discussion
- Appraise the purpose of discussions by examining their context and the motivation of participants
- Perform various roles in a discussion, including leader, participant, and moderator
- Demonstrate the ability to extend a discussion by adding relevant information or asking pertinent questions
- Explain and advance opinions by citing evidence and referring to authoritative sources
- Employ strategies such as summarizing main ideas or identifying areas of agreement to solve problems, resolve conflicts, and conclude discussions
- Convey criticism in a respectful and supportive way

D. LANGUAGE

CONTENT STANDARD

Students in Wisconsin will apply their knowledge of the nature, grammar, and variations of American English.

Rationale: The essential basis of English language arts is language. Language exists in many variations, and the ability to use it well is frequently a source of power, respect, and financial success. However, if students are unaware of how language works, they may be unable to use it effectively.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

▶ *BY THE END OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS WILL:*

D.4.1 Develop their vocabulary of words, phrases, and idioms as a means of improving communication

- Consult dictionaries, thesauruses, and other resources to find and compare definitions, choose among synonyms, and spell words correctly
- Use their knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes to interpret and convey the meaning of words
- Identify common figures of speech and use them appropriately

D.4.2 Recognize and interpret various uses and adaptations of language in social, cultural, regional, and professional situations, and learn to be flexible and responsive in their use of English

- Identify various styles and purposes of oral and written language and learn to communicate effectively in commonly occurring situations
- Describe and give examples of variations in American English that appear in different social, cultural, regional, and professional environments

BY THE END OF GRADE 8 STUDENTS WILL:

D.8.1 Develop their vocabulary and ability to use words, phrases, idioms, and various grammatical structures as a means of improving communication

- Consult dictionaries, thesauruses, handbooks, and grammar texts when choosing words, phrases, and expressions for use in oral and written presentations
- Explain how writers and speakers choose words and use figurative language such as similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, and allusion to achieve specific effects
- Choose words purposefully and evaluate the use of words in communications designed to inform, explain, and persuade

D.8.2 Recognize and interpret various uses and adaptations of language in social, cultural, regional, and professional situations, and learn to be flexible and responsive in their use of English

- Describe how American English is used in various public and private contexts, such as school, home, and work
- Make appropriate choices when speaking and writing, such as formal or informal language, considering the purpose and context of the communication
- Evaluate how audience and context affect the selection and use of words and phrases, including technical terms, slang, and jargon

BY THE END OF GRADE 12 STUDENTS WILL:

D.12.1 Develop their vocabulary and ability to use words, phrases, idioms, and various grammatical structures as a means of improving communication

- Examine the origin, history, denotation, connotation, and usage of English words and phrases by consulting dictionaries, thesauruses, handbooks, and other sources of information about the language
- Evaluate the effects of different types of language, such as literary and technical, formal and informal, in communications designed to narrate, inform, explain, persuade, and entertain
- Use language appropriate to the background, knowledge, and age of an audience
- Recognize and exercise options in modes of expression and choice of words when speaking and writing, especially when revising written work

D.12.2 Recognize and interpret various uses and adaptations of language in social, cultural, regional, and professional situations, and learn to be flexible and responsive in their use of English

- Evaluate the use of standard American English in public contexts, such as school and work
- Evaluate the choice of words, expressions, and style considering the purpose and context of a communication
- Analyze and explain how immediate context and broader social, cultural, regional, and professional variables influence the use of language, citing characteristics such as level of formality, slang, jargon, and emotional impact
- Draw inferences about values, attitudes, and points of view by analyzing a writer's or speaker's use of English
- Compare form, meaning, and value of different symbol systems, such as alphabets, signs, symbols- and of expressions commonly used in another language

E. MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

CONTENT STANDARD

Students in Wisconsin will use media and technology critically and creatively to obtain, organize, prepare and share information; to influence and persuade; and to entertain and be entertained.

Rationale: In a technological world in which thought is increasingly dominated by media, such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, movies, computer software, and electronic networks, students need to understand the impact of media on daily life. To use media effectively students must be able to evaluate information and match the information with the appropriate medium for a specific audience. In order to do this, they must recognize how communication changes from one medium to another.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

BY THE END OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS WILL:

E.4.1 Use computers to acquire, organize, analyze, and communicate information

- Operate common computer hardware and software
- Use basic word-processing, graphics, and drawing programs
- Create, store, and retrieve electronic files
- Access information using electronic reference resources, such as library catalogs, encyclopedias, almanacs, and indexes
- Generate, send, and retrieve electronic messages

E.4.2 Make informed judgments about media and products

- Identify the intent or appeal behind products and messages promoted via media
- Recognize basic propaganda techniques
- Identify images and symbols central to particular messages

E.4.3 Create products appropriate to audience and purpose

- Write news articles appropriate for familiar media
- Create simple advertising messages and graphics appropriate for familiar media
- Prepare, perform, and tape simple radio and television scripts
- Prepare and perform school announcements and program scripts

E.4.4 Demonstrate a working knowledge of media production and distribution

- Make distinctions between messages presented on radio, television, and in print
- Recognize how messages are adjusted for different audiences
- Identify sales approaches and techniques aimed at children

E.4.5 Analyze and edit media work as appropriate to audience and purpose

- Generate and edit media work as appropriate to audience and purpose, sequencing the presentation effectively and adding or deleting information as necessary to achieve desired effects
- Provide feedback to (and receive it from) peers about the content, organization, and overall effect of media work

BY THE END OF GRADE 8 STUDENTS WILL:

E.8.1 Use computers to acquire, organize, analyze, and communicate information

- Demonstrate efficient word-processing skills
- Construct and use simple databases
- Use manuals and on-screen help in connection with computer applications
- Perform basic computer operations on various platforms
- Collect information from various on-line sources, such as web pages, news groups, and listservs

E.8.2 Make informed judgments about media and products

- Recognize common structural features found in print and broadcast advertising
- Identify and explain the use of stereotypes and biases evident in various media
- Compare the effect of particular symbols and images seen in various media
- Develop criteria for selecting or avoiding specific broadcast programs and periodicals

E.8.3 Create media products appropriate to audience and purpose

- Write informational articles that target audiences of a variety of publications
- Use desktop publishing to produce products such as brochures and newsletters designed for particular organizations and audiences
- Create videotapes and audiotapes designed for particular audiences

E.8.4 Demonstrate a working knowledge of media production and distribution

- Plan a promotion or campaign that involves broadcast and print media production and distribution
- Analyze how messages may be affected by financial factors such as sponsorship
- Identify advertising strategies and techniques aimed at teenagers

E.8.5 Analyze and edit media work as appropriate to audience and purpose

- Revise media productions by adding, deleting, and adjusting the sequence and arrangement of information, images, or other content as necessary to improve focus, clarity, or effect
- Develop criteria for comprehensive feedback on the quality of media work and use it during production

BY THE END OF GRADE 12 STUDENTS WILL:

E.12.1 Use computers to acquire, organize, analyze, and communicate information

- Design, format, and produce attractive word-processed documents for various purposes
- Incorporate information from databases and spreadsheets into reports
- Integrate graphics appropriately into reports, newsletters, and other documents
- Retrieve and reproduce documents across various platforms
- Use on-line sources to exchange information

E.12.2 Make informed judgments about media and products

- Develop and apply evaluative criteria of accuracy and point of view to broadcast news programs
- Recognize and explain the impact of various media on daily life
- Analyze the content and effect of subtle persuasive techniques used on-line and in broadcast and print media
- Develop and apply criteria for evaluating broadcast programming

E.12.3 Create media products appropriate to audience and purpose

- Create multimedia presentations in connection with major projects, such as research reports or exhibitions
- Develop various media products to inform or entertain others in school or the community, such as slide shows, videos, newspapers, sound recordings, literary publications, and brochures

E.12.4 Demonstrate a working knowledge of media production and distribution

- Analyze the effect of media production techniques, such as music, camera angles, fade-outs, and lighting, on different audiences
- Evaluate the impact of various market factors on the effectiveness of media production and distribution
- Identify the impact of image and context on particular audiences receiving the same message
- Develop and apply criteria for evaluating advertising campaigns for a variety of products, past and present

E.12.5 Analyze and edit media work as appropriate to audience and purpose

- Develop and present criteria for evaluating a variety of media products
- Evaluate audience feedback on the clarity, form, effectiveness, technical achievement and aesthetic appeal of media work

F. RESEARCH AND INQUIRY

CONTENT STANDARD

Students in Wisconsin will locate, use, and communicate information from a variety of print and nonprint materials.

Rationale: Students acquire a wide range of abilities and tools for raising questions, investigating ideas, and solving problems. Research involves posing interesting and important questions, using multiple sources of information, analyzing and relating facts and concepts, and arriving at conclusions or new understandings (adapted from the national *Standards for the English Language Arts*).

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

▶ *BY THE END OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS WILL:*

F.4.1 Conduct research and inquiry on self-selected or assigned topics, issues, or problems and use an appropriate form to communicate their findings

- Propose research by formulating initial questions, narrowing the focus of a topic, identifying prior knowledge, and developing a basic plan for gathering information
- Conduct research by identifying, locating, exploring, and effectively using multiple sources of information appropriate to the inquiry, including print, nonprint, and electronic sources
- Recognize, record, organize, and acknowledge information pertinent to a project, accurately blending discoveries into answers
- Present the results of inquiry, reporting and commenting on the substance and process of learning, orally and in writing, using appropriate visual aids

BY THE END OF GRADE 8 STUDENTS WILL:

E.8.1 Conduct research and inquiry on self-selected or assigned topics, issues, or problems and use an appropriate form to communicate their findings

- Formulate research questions and focus investigation on relevant and accessible sources of information
- Use multiple sources to identify and locate information pertinent to research including encyclopedias, almanacs, dictionaries, library catalogs, indexes to periodicals, and various electronic search engines
- Conduct interviews, field studies, and experiments and use specialized resources (such as almanacs, fact books, pamphlets, and technical manuals) when appropriate to an investigation
- Compile, organize, and evaluate information, taking notes that record and summarize what has been learned and extending the investigation to other sources
- Review and evaluate the usefulness of information gathered in an investigation
- Produce an organized written and oral report that presents and reflects on findings, draws sound conclusions, adheres to the conventions for preparing a manuscript, and gives proper credit to sources

BY THE END OF GRADE 12 STUDENTS WILL:

E.12.1 Conduct research and inquiry on self-selected or assigned topics, issues, or problems and use an appropriate form to communicate their findings

- Formulate questions addressing issues or problems that can be answered through a well-defined and focused investigation
- Use research tools found in school and college libraries, take notes, collect and classify sources, and develop strategies for finding and recording information
- Conduct interviews, taking notes or recording and transcribing oral information, then summarizing the results
- Develop research strategies appropriate to the investigation, considering methods such as questionnaires, experiments, and field studies
- Organize research materials and data, maintaining a note-taking system that includes summary, paraphrase, and quoted material
- Evaluate the usefulness and credibility of data and sources by applying tests of evidence, including bias, position, expertise, adequacy, validity, reliability, and date
- Analyze, synthesize, and integrate data, drafting a reasoned report that supports and appropriately illustrates inferences and conclusions drawn from research
- Present findings in oral and written reports, correctly citing sources

Sample Proficiency Standard

The content included in this Sample Proficiency Standard section was drawn from the performance tasks developed as part of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's work with the Wisconsin Center for Education Research. We gratefully appreciate and acknowledge the contribution of Wisconsin educators who participated in the performance assessment development project.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

B. Writing

The performance tasks developed as part of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's work with the Wisconsin Center for Education Research provided the basis for the sample proficiency standard for writing below. We gratefully appreciate and acknowledge the contribution of Wisconsin educators who participated in the performance assessment development project.

CONTENT STANDARD

Students in Wisconsin will write clearly and effectively to share information and knowledge, to influence and persuade, to create and entertain.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- **Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes**
- **Plan, revise, edit, and publish clear and effective writing**
- **Understand the function of various forms, structures, and punctuation marks of standard American English and use them appropriately in written communications**

SAMPLE TASK

We have spent time discussing the concept of heroism. In small groups, we have examined different views and have considered certain individuals or groups of persons as possible heroes. In addition, we have read several passages describing heroic acts, persons, or situations.

You now have two class periods to write about heroism. You may choose from several different forms of writing, such as poem, narrative, character sketch, news report, or essay. Choose the one that will best allow you to express your understanding of heroism. This paper will *not* be scored according to what you believe or your choice of hero but on how well you write to deliver your message. Think of the members of your class as the audience. Your choice of form and content should be appropriate for the purpose of the writing, to express your understanding of heroism.

SAMPLES OF STUDENT WORK

EXPLANATION OF RATINGS OF STUDENT WORK

Advanced

This writer has a clear sense of delivery of the message in response to the assignment. Although the paper is relatively short, it is well developed and clearly focused. The writer's use of expressions, such as "...his hands grabbed upon empty air, as did his feet," "blazed his way to glory," "some heroes are quiet heroes; others become famous for it" illustrates a grasp of sophisticated stylistic devices. Variation in sentence structure, use of specific example, and mastery of language conventions combine to demonstrate advanced ability to communicate in writing.

Final Draft

There is a young man that illustrates perfectly the two most important qualities of being a hero -- courage and determination. Most people in the United States may have heard this man's story, and most of these people may use him as an example for younger children. This man's name is Dan Jansen.

Dan Jansen holds all kinds of world records for speed-skating, but there was one goal he couldn't reach: Olympic gold. He tried in Calgary in 1988 and in Albertville in 1992 but his hands grabbed upon empty air, as did his feet.

At Lillehammer in 1994, the elusive medal once again danced out of Dan's reach when he slipped in the race he was supposed to win. Disheartened, he went into the race that he was supposed to have only a long shot at. To everybody's surprise and delight, he blazed his way to gold and glory, capturing yet another world record. What a way to go!

Dan Jansen knows what it is like to lose. But he kept hoping and hoping, his courage carrying him through the rocky waters of his life. In the end, his courage and determination finally brought him to his goal.

We all aspire to be heroes someday, to save a life, but heroes aren't all about just saving lives. In my opinion, heroes must have courage and determination to attain their goals. But not every situation will bring out the hero in you. Only certain situations will do that. Some heroes are quiet heroes; others become famous for it, like Dan Jansen. But with courage and determination, everyone can be a hero.

Proficient

The writer captures the reader's attention in the first paragraph and holds the interest throughout the piece. A clear sense of beginning, middle, and end is evident in the organization, and appropriate paragraphing is used. Sentence variety and use of dialogue add to the effectiveness of this piece. The vocabulary includes effective words such as "jolted," "murmered," and "eventually." The few punctuation and usage errors do not detract from the writing. While this writing is clearly proficient, it is not advanced. Greater detail, some word choice changes, and some general revisions could increase the overall delivery of this writing.

Final Draft

Ordinary Person becomes Hero

Mr. [redacted] is just an ordinary person. He has a family and a job as a fireman. For six years he has gone through his daily tasks. He works 9st-5^{rr} everyday except Sundays. He also works on special call or emergencies. But on the night of May 23, he became a hero.

The night of May 23, mr. [redacted] from [redacted], Wiscensin was suddenly jolted out of his bed by a telephone call at 2 a.m. It was an emergency call; someone's house was on fire. Mr. [redacted] grabbed his coat and headed to the firestation. There he picked up three fellow workers, jumped ~~in~~ the fire truck, and went to the scene. As he arrived at 103 nd street, he noticed a blue and white house in flames.

The crowd murmured that [redacted] age 7, was still in the house. Mr. [redacted] grabbed his gear and went in the house to find her. About 8 minutes later he came out with what seemed to be a lifeless body. But after CPR, [redacted] started to cough, then eventually started breathing again.

"I was only doing my job", said Mr. [redacted], "I get payed to do this."

Others say he was a true hero. "He was brave to go into the burning house and risk his life," replied an attending neighbor.

"He is a man of courage and always ready to help out people in their time of ~~need~~ need," said Mrs. [redacted] mother of [redacted].

~~They~~ Heroes are brave, helpful people They do their job and do it well. They need not be famous, but ordinary people.

Basic

The writer has a sense of order with an introduction and logical progression of story. Some transitions are used and words such as "collide," "elderly," and "dispatch" add to the overall effect of the writing. Use of dialogue is attempted near the end. While the writer demonstrates understanding of composition, the lack of paragraphing, the errors in punctuation and usage, and the general difficulty in readability detract from the delivery of the message. Improvement in these areas is needed to assist this piece in its overall effectiveness.

Final Draft

The Car Accident

It was a warm summer evening and my whole family was at my babysitters. I was only four years old at the time. We were all on the porch when we heard a loud crash. We went to see what it was and when we saw that two cars had collided right on the corner of her block which was right in front of her house. We all ran to see what was the matter and we saw that an elderly couple and a young adult had collided. The elderly couple must have been coming back from church that night by the way they were dressed. When my mom saw the scene and there was blood everywhere she almost fainted. My dad having to take first aid and CPR course a year ago his was know what to do but not alot. When I saw the old man just covered with blood I ran to the house and called 911. The lady that answered asked me what the problem was and I told her that two cars had collided together. She asked me if any of them were moving and I told her that I didn't know because I only saw it for a split second. She told me that she was going to dispatch an ambulance and it will be there in a couple of minutes. When I went back outside there were people just standing around and watching and I couldn't figure out why they were just standing around. I ran to my dad and asked if he needed anything and he told me to go get some blankets from the truck. When I got back, there was a fire man by the name of that lived up the block and he said he is going to backup but they said that help was on the way. When the ambulance took the people away asked us who called 911 and I said I did. He said to us how did you know to call them and I said that I was in cubscouts and they always told us that when you see a bad accident to call 911. He said, "Son if you wouldn't have called at the time that you did those people would have died, you're a hero for saving their lives."

Minimal

Although the writer addresses the writing assignment and topic, the paper lacks development of thought and details. The language is simplistic and does not capture the interest of the reader. Sentences are simple and without some needed punctuation. Overall, this writing does not deliver its message successfully.

Final Draft

I thinks heros should have speacial powerss, thats why my hero is Superman. He has saved many many many lives. One life he saved was that of one of his friends Lois Lain. One day he saved her from getting hit by a bus. And thats why he is my hero.

THE END

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Appendix A

Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards
English Language Arts Summary

Reading/Literature— Students in Wisconsin will read and respond to a wide range of writing to build an understanding of written materials, of themselves, and of others. Students will:

- Use effective reading strategies to achieve their purposes.
- Read, interpret, and critically analyze literature.
- Read and discuss literary and nonliterary texts in order to understand human experience.
- Read to acquire information.

Writing— Students in Wisconsin will write clearly and effectively to share information and knowledge, to influence and persuade, to create and entertain. Students will:

- Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Plan, revise, edit, and publish clear and effective writing.
- Understand the function of various forms, structures, and punctuation marks of standard American English and use them appropriately in communications.

Oral Language— Students in Wisconsin will listen to understand and will speak clearly and effectively for diverse purposes. Students will:

- Orally communicate information, opinions, and ideas effectively to different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Listen to and comprehend oral communications.
- Participate effectively in discussion.

Language— Students in Wisconsin will apply their knowledge of the nature, grammar, and variations of American English. Students will:

- Develop their vocabulary of words, phrases, and idioms as a means of improving communication.
- Recognize and interpret various uses and adaptations of language in social, cultural, regional, and professional situations, and learn to be flexible and responsive in their use of English.

Media and Technology— Students in Wisconsin will use media and technology critically and creatively to obtain, organize, prepare and share information; to influence and persuade; and to entertain and be entertained. Students will:

- Use computers to acquire, organize, analyze, and communicate information.
- Make informed judgments about media and products.
- Create media products appropriate to audience and purpose.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of media production and distribution.
- Analyze and edit media work as appropriate to audience and purpose.

Research and Inquiry— Students in Wisconsin will locate, use, and communicate information from a variety of print and nonprint materials. Students will:

- Conduct research and inquiry on self-selected or assigned topics, issues, or problems and use an appropriate form to communicate their findings.

Appendix B

The individuals and members of the groups listed below contributed to the development of the Wisconsin Academic Standards in English Language Arts by serving as reviewers. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged. We especially appreciate the continuous and strong support from the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English and Wisconsin State Reading Association throughout the standards development process.

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Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English

Wisconsin Education Association

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Wisconsin State Reading Association

Wisconsin State Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council

Wisconsin Professors of Reading

Wisconsin Writing Project

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Notes